

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

UNCLAS GENEVA 002422

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

DEPT PASS TO IO/SHA, DRL/MLA

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PHUM UZ

SUBJECT: MEETING WITH UN INDEPENDENT EXPERT FOR UZBEKISTAN
MICHELE PICARD

SUMMARY

1. (U) The French Permanent Mission in Geneva hosted a meeting October 4 for UK, Russian and U.S. representatives with Michele Picard, the UN Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in Uzbekistan. The Independent Expert's report to the Secretariat is due by December 15. Judge Picard has not yet received authorization from the Uzbek government for a country visit, and is concerned that the authorization may not come, or may be so delayed as to render a visit impractical. She sought assurances from the UK, U.S. and Russian representatives of governmental support for her mission, and asked pointedly what measures those governments might be prepared to take if the Uzbek authorities refused to cooperate with her work. End Summary.

RUSSIANS LEND QUALIFIED SUPPORT

2. (U) Judge Picard started by noting that it was not clear that Uzbekistan would agree to allow her to visit the country. She submitted a request to the Uzbek government on September 15 but has had no reply to date. She also noted that although she had requested a meeting with the Uzbek Charge d'Affaires in Geneva, and had been flexible as to when she could travel to Geneva to meet him, she had been told that he was too busy to see her. She specifically inquired if the U.S., UK and Russia supported her mission. We joined the UK representative in assuring her that her mandate had our governments' full support. The Russian response was more equivocal, noting first that the Independent Expert's mandate must be limited to the 1503 procedure, and could not expand to include an investigation of the May events at Andijon. The Expert's role, in the Russian view, must be limited to responding to specific complaints. The Russian added pointedly that the Belarus experience with Special Rapporteur for Human Rights in Belarus Adrien Severin showed that an expert deciding on his own to expand his mandate would likely lead a country to refuse to cooperate.

3. (U) Judge Picard noted that, while she agreed that Andijon was not included in her mandate, limiting her work to responses to specific complaints was impractical. All domestic remedies must be exhausted before filing a complaint, and her report was due in mid-December. Picard said that, if allowed to visit, she planned to stay two weeks to allow sufficient time to meet with a broad spectrum of people, including government officials and NGOs. In addition to reviewing the human rights situation at present, Picard said she needed to see what changes (deterioration) had occurred since Andijon. She expressed particular interest in the condition of Uzbekistan's judicial system, and asked about U.S. assistance for judicial reform. Mission officers provided her with a copy of the August 17 fact sheet on U.S. assistance to Uzbekistan.

SAFETY CONCERN

4. (SBU) Comment: In an aside after the meeting ended, and after the Russian representative had departed, Judge Picard commented that UNHCR had warned her that visiting Uzbekistan in her role as Independent Expert could be hazardous. She had been told that "accidents can happen quickly there," and noted casually that the caution had given her pause.
Cassel